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judgment, nor the motive, in morality. "The good consists of friendship, family and political relations, economic utilization of mechanical resources, science, art, in all their complex and variegated forms and elements. There is no separate and rival moral good, no separate, empty and rival 'good will.'"

This is a moral theory based on the facts of moral experience, a thoroughly empirical doctrine of moral values. Indeed, from beginning to end, the book is permeated with the atmosphere and the noise of facts. The ambiguities in the utilitarian doctrine of happiness, the formalism, legalism, and inadequacy of strictly intuitionist methods, and the vagueness and practical weakness of the naturalistic and evolutionary ethics of the past are all brought to the common touch-stone of facts. Probably no more convincing effort to construct a system of moral philosophy by a strictly scientific method has ever been carried out. The book is written in a serious spirit which must commend itself to all who regard morality as a primary factor in civilization and to all who regard moral culture as an essential element in education. It is designed as a textbook and in view of its splendid bibliographies, the compact character of its argument, and the illustrations in ethical research containing many suggestions for further work, it may be used in both introductory and advanced classes.

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Principia Ethica. By GEORGE EDWARD MOORE. Cambridge: University Press, 1903. Pp. xxvii+232. \$2.50.

The honor or reproach of freshest novelty in philosophy undoubtedly belongs to these latest days to a tendency of which the present volume is an interesting representative. For the English and American revival of realism now actively in progress is younger even than pragmatism, but just now entering upon its second decade; and if it seems, in the nature of the case, less likely to enjoy or suffer from a widespread popular vogue, it is sure to provoke, perhaps most of all on the part of pragmatism itself, close attention and study. Although Mr. Moore's volume is a vigorous and stimulating discussion of ethical principles, one cannot help suspecting that it was written with a predominant interest in those more general issues of the theory of knowledge and metaphysics which

the historical associations of the term "realism" immediately suggest. The infrequency of concrete illustration, the consciously logical precision of style approaching at times an aggressive mannerism, the pains expended upon discrimination, division, and subdivision, the austere conservative, practical conclusions attained as to the likelihood or possibility of advantageous innovations in the moral life, the "externality" or detachment with which the moral judgment is interpreted—these all give the reader the impression of the logician or epistemologist availing himself here of a body of "material" which he finds well adapted to his ulterior designs. One sees no evidence of urgent primary interest on the author's part in ethical problems as such, or of special vocation in other respects for the treatment of them in their proper ethical character. It is this logical predilection that gives the book what seems likely to be its principal direction of usefulness. There is much indeed in the way of suggestive restatement of familiar things, particularly in the chapters on hedonism and on metaphysical ethics. The fundamental propositions which determine Mr. Moore's method and results undoubtedly go to the foundations of ethics itself and compel fresh reflection upon these on the reader's part. But on the whole, despite the constraint of his enviable enthusiasm of discovery one can hardly share in Mr. Moore's rather frequently expressed assurance of the revolutionary and epoch-making importance of his book as a contribution to ethical theory. It seems more probable that it will be valued chiefly, not for its results in this direction, but for the interesting, and, I think, important sidelights which it throws upon the character and motives of the realistic theory of knowledge and metaphysics.

Good and evil, according to Mr. Moore, define the subject-matter of ethics, and with reference to these it is the business of ethics to do two things: (1) to determine what things are good, and (2) to determine by what modes of conduct these things are produced. In the history of ethics, Mr. Moore contends, these entirely distinct questions have virtually always been confused, with the twofold result that ethics has been supposed to have to do with conduct exclusively and that certain modes of conduct, really valuable only as means to what is good, have been supposed somehow to be good in themselves. This is simply the confusion of means and end, and nothing can be hoped for in the way of sound ethical theory or practice until we learn to avoid it. As a matter of fact, while some

sorts of conduct are undoubtedly good in themselves, many things also besides conduct are good in themselves, and this fact, which, according to Mr. Moore, is of the last importance for ethics, is hopelessly obscured by confusing the two fundamental questions of the science.

When we ask, What is the good? Mr. Moore continues, we are likely to commit an even greater fallacy than this fallacy of means and end. We may try to answer the question by seeking for a definition of goodness and this search is foredoomed to failure because good (or goodness) is strictly indefinable. If we mean by our question, however, What *things* are good (i. e., possess the attribute of goodness) we are on the right track, for this question is certainly not inherently unanswerable if there is to be such a thing as ethics at all, and indeed indicates one of the two great branches of ethical inquiry. But philosophers have, almost without exception, imagined that they could tell what good a goodness is and from this aboriginal blunder have arisen the three great types of ethical theory whose fruitless contentions have made the history of ethics a dreary waste, the naturalistic, the hedonistic, and the metaphysical. Differing from each other in the manner in which they attempt to define good, these three types agree in conceiving good to be *definable*, and this initial fallacy, says Mr. Moore, has rendered ethical literature as a whole nearly worthless.

For how can we suppose goodness to be definable? Suppose we say: The good is the pleasant, or the "natural," or whatever we like. Do we mean merely that pleasure or the natural order is a good thing? Then we should have said just this—but saying this obviously leaves good still undefined. Or do we mean that when we call a thing good we mean nothing but that it is pleasant or that it exists? This is but our own arbitrary verbal definition of the term, not a real definition of the thing. As our own it is, however, no better than anyone's else and so we have forthwith an end of ethics. "My dear Sirs," exclaims Mr. Moore, "what we want to know from you as ethical teachers is, not how people use a word; it is not even what kind of actions they approve, which the use of this word 'good' may certainly imply; what we want to know is simply what *is* good" (p. 12). We can learn what *is* good but it is meaningless to ask or to try to tell what *good is*. We can find out what things have goodness, but to try to tell what good *is* is much like trying to tell what yellow is. The hedonist believes that

pleasure is good; but if he means by this anything more than that pleasure is pleasure he must understand "good" and "pleasure" in his proposition to mean different things. And so good always is beyond the sphere of definition, no matter in what terms its definition may be attempted.

After a searching and valuable criticism of the three historic types of theory Mr. Moore comes, in chap. v, to the second of the two great ethical problems, under the caption of "The Relation of Ethics to Conduct." What conduct is productive of good? This is, of course, the crucial question for any system of ethics. Mr. Moore, however, does not hold out great promise.

The utmost [he declares] that practical ethics can hope to discover is which, among a few alternatives, possible under certain circumstances, will, on the whole, produce the best result. . . . But . . . it is difficult to see how we can establish even a probability that by doing one thing we shall obtain a better total result than by doing another. I shall merely endeavor to point out how much is assumed, when we assume that there is such a probability, and on what lines it seems possible that this assumption may be justified. It will be apparent that it has never yet been justified—that no sufficient reason has ever yet been found for considering one action more right or more wrong than another (pp. 151, 152).

Under the circumstances, then, about the best we can do is: (1) to trust that "most of the rules most commonly recognized by Common Sense" are "generally better as means" (as (*a*) apparently according with the strong and universally prevalent tendencies of men to preserve and propagate life and to acquire property and as (*b*) conducive to an orderly social state which the condition of the realization of all great goods); (2) to adhere to these rules inflexibly (since, although there are doubtless exceptional cases in which deviation would be productive of greater good, "the individual can never be justified in assuming that his is one of these exceptional cases"); and (3) as a rule to refuse to adopt "proposed changes in social custom, advocated as being better rules to follow than those now actually followed." In cases where no customary rule applies and it is impossible to prove the advantageousness of any proposed general rule, it is better that the individual should "guide his choice by a direct consideration of the intrinsic value or vileness of the effects which his action may produce" (pp. 146-66). In sum, then, we have the result that the connections of cause and effect on this mundane sphere between acts and intrinsic goods and

evils are so difficult to trace and so dependent, at any given time, upon transitory environing conditions that conformity to custom is the safest rule. But where no customary rule already applies it is safer *not* to conform one's conduct to any *proposed* general rule, but to act independently, looking to the goods which the act bids fair directly to produce. Here evidently prudence will dictate conduct promising to be productive of (1) good for which the individual has a strong inclination (which will, in general, be "goods affecting himself and those in whom he has a strong personal interest") and (2) goods most quickly attainable, since thereby the risk of disappointment and failure is reduced to a minimum (pp. 166, 167). Thus, for Mr. Moore, the moral life reduces to unquestioning conventionality relieved by an occasional excursion into Egoism.

In the concluding chapter, entitled "The Ideal," an enumeration and discussion of the chief intrinsic goods are offered. It is impossible here to reproduce the details. The method of determination is to consider each "thing" (under which term Mr. Moore in Platonic fashion includes properties or attributes and includes also complexes and combinations of "things") as "existing absolutely by itself" in isolation from all other "things." We are thus in a position to judge without error whether the existence of the "thing" is good. This task might seem a formidable one but Mr. Moore does not carry it in this chapter beyond the discrimination of (1) unmixed goods, (2) evils, and (3) mixed goods, with a general or illustrative treatment under each head. All "great" goods, Mr. Moore holds (e. g., the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects) "involve both a cognition and an emotion directed toward its object" (p. 225), but there are lesser goods which involve neither. Thus, he argues, beauty in external nature, quite apart from any sight or contemplation by human beings, ought to be considered better than ugliness and filth—it is better, that is, that beauty *should exist* than that its opposite should exist. Good, in a word is a *reality* and as such is always independent of any cognition or appreciation whatever. This is as true of the "great" goods into which cognition and emotion enter as it is of an unseen good like a paradise on the far side of the moon. In fact it seems to be ultimately the mere *existence* of objects that is good or bad. Some things whose existence is good indeed contain, *as constituents*, states of mind and states of feeling

but these compounded goods nevertheless are good, whether or no there is knowledge of their existence or appreciation of their qualities.

The ideas thus imperfectly outlined strike one at first as an ingenious issue of truth and paradox. The impression of paradox remains after one has tried to think the whole through for oneself, but what seemed ingenuity before now impresses one as partly mere inconsequence and partly the working-out of preconceptions and assumptions which a direct reflection upon the crises and procedures of the moral life would never of itself have suggested. The indefinability of good is undoubtedly the ethical foundation of the whole discussion. One gratefully welcomes both the direct argument, and the indirect elucidation in the critical chapters, by which Mr. Moore brings out the principle into such bold, striking prominence, although one may see that without the direct appeal to the moral experience (pp. 16, 17) nearly all the rest would be verbal quibbling. But between the indefinability of good and the *epistemological* realism of good set forth in the preceding paragraph there seems to be no logical connection whatever. And one must feel that Mr. Moore's apparent further deduction of a Platonic or *metaphysical* realism of good from the principle of indefinability is both an anachronism and more than the principle, properly understood in its ethical sense, will warrant. To hold good indefinable seems in fact merely a rather formal and technical, if not pedantic, way of saying that by good we mean neither (1) what is, nor (2) what we are, or spontaneously desire, nor (3) what we shall be or shall spontaneously desire when perfect. If good meant either of these things then it would be definable since these things are, at least hypothetically, definable. But if good meant either of these things it would be because the moral life was as such not life at all but fixity or at best an approach toward fixity. It is because the moral life is a life, is growth, that good is indefinable. Curiously enough, that the moral life is life and growth and change is just what Mr. Moore denies by his practical conclusions in the chapter on "Ethics in Relation to Conduct." But these conclusions seem to follow, not from the indefinability of good, but the realism which sets an impassable gulf between the good and the process of attaining and increasing it.

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